

**HEARING AT THE
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY**

**Subcommittee on Intelligence
Information sharing and Terrorism Risk Assessment**

U.S. Representative Rob Simmons, Chairman

“The Homeland Security implications of radicalization”

**Wednesday September 20, 2006 1 PM
Room 2212 Rayburn House Office Building**

TESTIMONY BY PROFESSOR WALID PHARES

**“INTERCEPTING RADICALIZATION
AT THE INDOCTRINATION STAGE”**

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Chairman Simmons and Members of the Committee,

It is a privilege and an honor to appear before you today to discuss the theme *“The Homeland Security implications of radicalization.”* My contribution is titled: “Intercepting radicalization at the indoctrination stage.”

Identification of the Threat

Your concerns about “radicalization” as a threat to U.S. Homeland Security are warranted. For after twenty five years of studying the ideology and the evolution of the doctrines that produced the self-declared Jihadist movement (*al haraka al Jihadiya*) which has declared, waged and continues to conduct war against the United States and other democracies, I conclude along with a number of colleagues in this field of expertise that the Terrorism America and its allies are facing in the War on Terror, is a direct product of this radical ideology. The 19 men, who massacred 3,000 US and other citizens on September 11, belong to al Qaeda and the latter is a self declared Salafist-Jihadist organization. Every single case of Terrorism uncovered on U.S. territory, since 9/11, was motivated by this ideology. To name a few: The Virginia Paintball gang, the dirty bomb case, the shoe bomber case, al Qaeda's John Walker, Azzam al Amriki AKA Adam Gadahn, the Oregon case, the Virginia multiple cases, the Jihadi charities, etc. This ideology was omnipresent in the cases that ended with court sentences and those which didn't; in the Sheikh Abdel Rahman case of 1993; in the statements made by the Zarqawi networks while assassinating innocent civilians; in all speeches by Usama Bin Laden, Ayman al Zawahiri from 1998 till now;

and on all jihadi web sites in all languages: one global common thread is always omnipresent: The Jihadi ideology. And in parallel to al Qaeda's radical doctrine another ideology of Jihadism follows the teachings of Ayatollah Khomeini and is embodied by the public speeches of Iran's President Mahmoud Ahmedinijad and Hezbollah. Hence, the ideologies that produces "Radicalization," are the Jihadist ones. They are of two main "trees," the Jihadi Salafist and the Jihadi Khomeinist. These doctrines, taught and disseminated worldwide and in America, are the producers of the "Jihadists" (*al Jihadiyun*) who have declared war and waged it against the United States both overseas and in the homeland. Jihadism is the ideological common identity of terror groups al Qaeda, Salafi Combat Group of the Maghreb, Hamas, Islamic Jihad, Jemaa Islamiya of south Asia, the Taliban of Afghanistan, Laskar Taiba of Pakistan, the Mahakem Islamiya of Somalia, and other Salafi-Wahabi groups internationally, in addition to Hezbollah. Jihadism was the inspiration for the 1990s attacks, 9/11, Madrid, London, Beslan, Mumbai, Riyadh, Casablanca, the Sunni Triangle in Iraq and other violence associated with Terrorism. Hence at this stage of the War on Terror, the ideology behind the threat has been identified and thus should be addressed.

Development of the Threat

Prior to 9/11, the spread of Jihadism was operated by Salafi, Wahabi, Muslim Brotherhood (*Ikhwan*), Tablighi, Deobandi and Takfiri schools of thought around the world, mostly by the means of religious schools known as *Madrassa*. Moving into the United States gradually as of the 1970s, and increasingly in the 1990s, Jihadi cadres took the control of existing religious schools funded by foreign support but also formed their own indoctrination networks, often in and around Mosques and other social and cultural centers. In about twenty years of militant activities, the Jihadist ideology produced three generations of radicals, a pool which Terrorists have and continue to recruit from. The perpetrators of the September 11, 2001 attacks are foreign Jihadists. But most of the other arrested Terrorists (or alleged Terrorists) claiming the same ideology and who identify with al Qaeda or its allies, are "American Jihadists," citizens or permanent residents, U.S.-born or naturalized. Hence the most dangerous dimension of the ideology of Jihadism is the fact that it has already recruited and inspired Americans to wage war against their own nation. Therefore Jihadism is a direct threat against Homeland Security

Components of the threat

This threat against national security and against the foundations of civil society and democracy is embodied by a set of ideas and concepts that reject the legitimacy of citizens' free choice, their natural liberties, pluralism, and the rule of secular law. The Jihadi ideology is not another social or political way of thinking within Democracy, nor is it a political alternative to one particular party or a specific policy in domestic or foreign affairs. Jihadism rejects the American constitution, the bill of rights, the international declaration on human rights, the United Nations and international law. Jihadism aim at destroying democracies and installing a totalitarian regime named Caliphate. And to do so, Jihadism creates the conviction in the minds of its adherents that war against the Government, people and constitution of the United States is the path towards achieving the universal goal. The beginning of the threat starts with the "click" that transforms a citizen into a Jihadist. From there one, the constant objective of the Jihadi recruit is to strike against the national security of the United States. The Terrorist can be a member of al Qaeda if he/she are successful in establishing the contact, as for example with the case of Adam Gadahn and Jose Padilla, or they could operate under an al Qaeda like Jihadism, without having established a link with the mother ship.

Strategic penetration

The strategic penetration operated by the Jihadists before and since 9/11 is based on three models: One are the Jihadists who originates overseas and move to the United States, either legally (visa, lawful immigration, marriage, political asylum) or illegally. In either of these cases the Jihadis ends up operating on the inside of the country, using its laws and facilities. The estimate of Jihadists who have infiltrated the country over the past two decades is certainly in the hundreds, possibly close to a thousand. This "first generation" Jihadists has organized itself to perform two activities: One is to grow its own strength for "future Jihads." Two is to produce the second generation of American-born Jihadists. If you analyze the average age of U.S. born Jihadists, you would conclude that the production of the second "generation" has begun in the late 1980s and mostly since the early 1990s. The formation of this "second generation" can only happen through two methods. First is to indoctrinate then recruit within the Muslim community using a variety of methods and already penetrated institutions. Second, is for them to take the control of the religious conversion of non-Muslims and indoctrinate the converts during the process or after the process: Hence a first generation of radical Salafists-Wahabis has already processed a radicalization and the recruitment of American-born Muslims or converts. The issue is not conversion: This is a free and pluralist society. Certainly there is and would be a problem with the radicalization taking place within a particular community. But the real issue affecting Homeland Security is the systematic penetration of a religious community and the recruitment of Jihadists to perform acts of Terrorism and aggression against national security.

And once the "Pool" of indoctrinated individuals is formed, mostly of younger persons then the Terror organizations can recruit from. However, Jihadists in the West in general and in the U.S. in particular, are of two types once they are formed: Either they join an organization and moves into a cell, or they form their own cell, without connecting with a larger organization or al Qaeda. The most dangerous Jihadists, both on the individual level or as self-formed cells are those who have been able or are in the process of penetrating the defense-security system of the United States. In this realm, the Jihadists can harm the most the national security of the Homeland, and analytical indications project that one of their ultimate goals is to penetrate and weaken U.S. Homeland Security.

Threat shield

There are several shields that "protect" the U.S.-based Jihadists from containment. Among these shields are

- a. The little ability of the public to identify them since their ideology wasn't officially been identified by the Government.
- b. Without the public, Law Enforcement and Homeland Security cannot mobilize on a large scale to identify and isolate the Jihadists activities. Furthermore, by not identifying

the ideology and its strategies, the U.S. Government cannot direct its agencies and resources against the threat.

c. The ideology of Jihadi-Terrorism unfortunately, enjoys the political freedoms of the country. It is "protected" by advocacy groups, legal defense and is funded both domestically and by foreign regimes and organizations.

Resistance to “radicalization”

To establish a national resistance to "radicalization" following are 6 suggestions:

1. Identification of the ideology of Jihadism by Government, media and experts.
2. Mobilization against the ideology of Jihadism by the public and educational institutions
3. Ban of the ideology by the U.S. Congress
4. Mass education of the public about it
5. Working with domestic NGOs, with the general public and specifically with the Muslim communities
6. Working with international INGOs and particularly with liberal, democratic and humanist Muslims

Looking at the future

In summary, Terrorism is threatening Homeland Security and Jihadism is a main root cause of Terrorism. The U.S. capacity of protecting Homeland security and defending national security will depend largely on developing policies and laws that would identify, ban, isolate and shrink Jihadism, with the help of the American public in general and the Muslim and Middle Eastern communities in particular. Such a shift in Homeland security must be based on a comprehensive strategy of containment of the Terror ideology within the framework of civil and democratic rights of society.

In closing, I would like to thank you and the committee members and staff for the opportunity to present this testimony today. I look forward to responding to any question that you might have.

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September 20, 2006
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